

Louis v gerstner jr



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Louis Gerstner: Social Responsibility and Ethics Based on the earlier parts of the paper, it could be implied that Louis Gerstner is a Transformational leader because he is able to turn around companies on the brink of extinction. While many of his critics would denounce his ruthless policies that trimmed down that size of IBM, there is more to the man than just a good business sense behind the man; he also had a heart for more important matters in life such as education.

For one, even when he retired, he committed himself to social responsibility by founding the Teaching Commission which was mainly aimed at “developing policy recommendations to solve the problems of the teaching crisis” (qfinance.com). In line with that, he also co-chaired Achieve, an organization that focus on improving the academic standards for public school in the U. S. In fact, he really supported quality education even when he was the CEO of IBM. He established Reinventing Education, an educational partnership with a number of states and school districts, enabling them to benefit from IBM technology, and technical assistance. His actions and advocacy did not go unnoticed; in fact, he was awarded honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II in 2001.

Social responsibility was already a concern for Gerstner even during his IBM days. In a speech addressed to Comdex, he already made mention of how technology and social responsibility go hand in hand, to wit:

I think we will make our visions reality. I think that as stewards of our industry, we will step up to the challenges of social responsibility. We will improve the world, and the way we work, the way we communicate, live and learn as people. (Transcript of Louis Gestner speech at Comdex)

This shows how radical Gerstner is as a leader since he went beyond selling

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computers; he believed that helping people communicate well through technology is a social responsibility.

During that time that Louis Gerstner ruled IBM, social responsibility then was a concept that was uncommonly practiced by organizations. He contributed to social responsibility by erasing the barriers between class and gender within the organization which is a higher form of social responsibility. Unlike other organizations, that donated for a cause or planted a tree, Gerstner walked his talked. Gerstner established a diversity taskforce that addressed to diversity issues . Cohen (2010) perfectly describes from Drucker's viewpoint how Gerstner practiced the

It worked and understanding and its using its diversity became a major competitive advantage for IBM. As a result of Gerstner's initiative the number of female executives in the company grew 370 percent and the number of ethnic minority executives increased by 233 percent. All of this had a major effect on bottom line profits. (p. 1)

Gerstner showed social responsibility by packaging it as an innovative solution to enhanced customer support. It is implied then that the man looked beyond profits since diversity practice during that time was uncommon. He saw a need for it in IBM since he analyzes an organization's strength on a holistic manner which means including organizational culture. Looking further, the man during his retirement days devoted himself to education and other pursuits that would develop society. Indeed, Gerstner is a man of ethics and a walking model for social responsibility.

References

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